

Female Asian American Others pp.87-99

A PPT by B.A. Luis Salazar Castro

LM-1368 Women and/in Literature

Asian Americans

- Have a very particular case
- They immigrated massively towards San Francisco and were held in custody until their citizenship was approved
- During this captivity they began to carve or write poetry on the walls of their cells
- They are culturally seclusive and that means they are very peculiar in their interaction

“Aliens”

- Because of their cultural seclusion, they seem alien or detached from the main culture around them
- Their refusal to adapt “American” traditions or behaviors caused the main culture to reject them
- Thus, they were seen as out of place and as mere workforce competition
- Their early literary works were autobiographical

Their Women

- Their autobiographies depicted them searching for “American” husbands
- Mostly, their writers were those who had the privilege of receiving an education:
Onoto Watanna, Meiki Lin, and Jade Snow Wong
- More contemporary ones:
Maxine Hong Kingston, Amy Tan, Carolyn Lei-lamilau and Lois-Ann Yamanaka
- Another central topic to their writings was the double discrimination they faced as asian and asian women

In Feminist Criticism

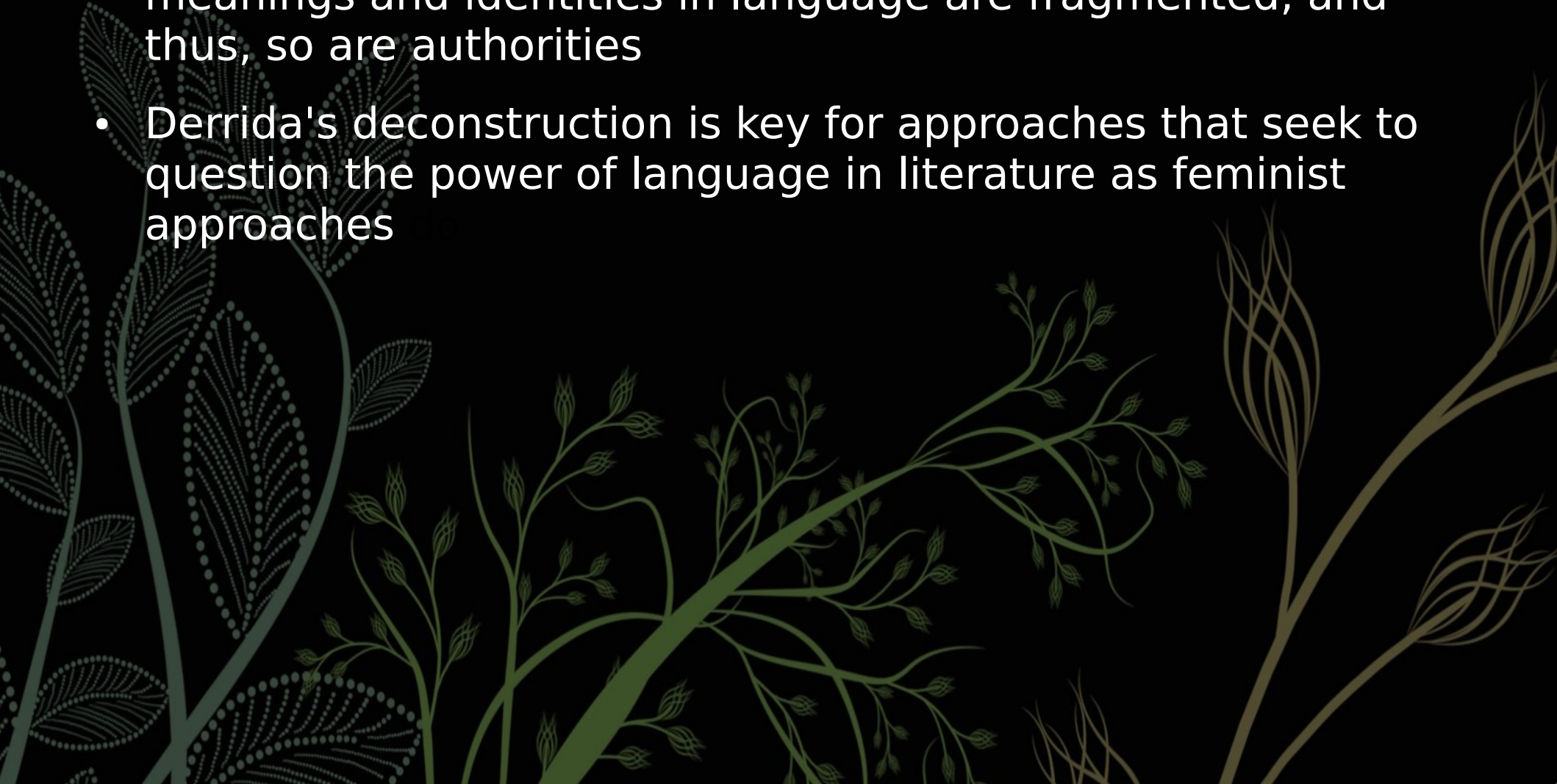
- It is difficult to define because Asian Americans base their life experience on Asian and Chinese history, culture and philosophy
- Therefore, femininity outside their culture is alien and too difficult to relate to
- Marxism has dominated China since the 20th century and thus male dominance (or oppression) is one of the main concerns of Asian and Chinese feminism now
- However, tradition dictates for femininity to remain in the subject position that Marxism tries to battle
- Post colonialism is also key in matters of Asian American femininity

French Feminist Critics: Deconstructing Patriarchy and Hierarchies pp. 99-108



Derrida and Deconstruction

- language is not reliable, it is ambiguous, fluid and complex
- meanings and identities in language are fragmented, and thus, so are authorities
- Derrida's deconstruction is key for approaches that seek to question the power of language in literature as feminist approaches



French Feminist Critics

- Tyson divides them into:

Materialist: concerned with socio-economic oppression. Simone de Beauvoir key for her views on female otherness and female dependence. Christine Delphy views women as subordinates within their families (Marxist). Colette Guillaumin deals with the appropriation of women as objects.

Psychoanalytic: concerned with women's psychological experience (more influenced by Derrida). Its three main exponents were Helene Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray; all three were influenced by Derrida, Lacan and Foucault and their theories were also post-modern and post-colonial.

They were also deeply interested in issues of female bodies, selfhood and ownership of women's bodies.